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AUTHOR Beck, Paul Allen: Jennings, M. Kent
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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the effects of pre-adult socialization on adult political activity. Four causal models are evaluated. Three models assess the direct and indirect effects of parental characteristics: socioeconomic status, level of political activity, and level of non-political (organizational) activity. The fourth model assesses the impact of adolescent involvement in high school activities. The two samples, one in 1965 and the other in 1973, consist of over 1200 students and their parents. Results indicate that taken individually each pathway to participation has an effect. When the four models are combined into a single model, all remain important except the one denoting parent involvement in non-political activities. The combined model also reveals the crucial role of civic orientations in converting pre-adult experiences into later participation. The conclusion is that socialization influences must be considered in explaining political participation. (Author/KC)

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PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION*

by

Paul Allen Beck
Florida State University

M. Kent Jennings
University of Michigan

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Abstract

PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION

Paul Allen Beck
Florida State University

M. Kent Jennings
University of Michigan

The argument of this paper is that adult participation in politics has strong pre-adult antecedents in addition to the contemporaneous factors emphasized by recent studies. To achieve a more dynamic perspective on participation, data are drawn from the 1965-1973 national socialization panel study of young Americans and their parents. Four causal models depicting pathways to participation among young adults are evaluated; each includes civic orientations as intervening variables. Three of the models assess the direct and indirect effects of parental characteristics—socio-economic status, level of political activity, and level of non-political (organizational) activity. The fourth model assesses the impact of adolescent involvement in high school activities. Taken individually, each pathway is shown to have an effect, with parent socio-economic status and high school activism having the most impact. When the four pathways are combined in a single model to reflect the connections among them, all remain important except the one denoting parent involvement in non-political activities. The combined model also reveals the crucial role of civic orientations in converting pre-adult experiences into later participation. Civic orientations are the primary carriers of pre-adult political learning. Overall, the results rebut the challenge laid down by several critics of socialization research concerning the linkage between early learning and adult political behavior.

Citizen participation in American political life is a subject of considerable importance to students of politics. Relatively few Americans venture into political involvement beyond the simple act of voting, which itself is now performed only by a bare majority of adults. The activists come disproportionately from certain sectors of the population. Given these facts, attention is focussed justifiably on the reasons for participation and the special characteristics and concerns (or biases) of the participants.

Two approaches for treating these issues have been most common. A strictly rationalist approach is based on the expectation that citizens become active to gain palpable benefits. Particularism is assumed to be the principal characteristic of political activists following this approach. Alternatively, activism may be viewed as the result less of material motives than of psychological needs and social or group norms, perhaps as well as political ideologies. Each of these approaches promises to contribute to an understanding of the reasons for and the biases of participation in the United States.

Research on participation beyond voting has been dominated to date by the socio-psychological rather than the rational perspective.[1] The pioneering work of Verba and Nie (1972) follows this approach almost exclusively in its emphasis on, e.g., social status, civic attitudes, organizational involvement, group consciousness, and age to explain participation. Only in introducing the concept of particularized contacting do Verba and Nie reflect the rationalist approach. Missing from their explanatory "model" is the emphasis on material inducements for participation (e.g., jobs, contracts, favors) that fills the

lore of party and machine politics.

Within the dominant perspective, further theoretical narrowing has been necessitated by a reliance on cross-sectional survey evidence to study participation. The reasons for participation, as well as its biases, have been viewed as contemporaneous with these study designs. This means that current psychological and sociological forces have been emphasized to the exclusion of more temporally remote factors, such as past political socialization and experience.

This paper examines political participation from a longitudinal perspective to specify the effects of pre-adult socialization on political activity. A data base which links young adults to their adolescent political orientations and behavior and to their parents enables us to estimate pathways to participation through the socialization process. In particular, we shall evaluate the contributions of parent status, parent political and non-political participation, and child high school activities to the political activity of young adults in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The data base is a two-wave panel study of young Americans and their parents. The first wave is a representative cross-section sample of 1,669 high school seniors and their parents, personally interviewed in the spring of 1965. The second wave, conducted in early 1973, consists of the results of personal interviews with 1,119 of the youths and 1,118 of their parents as well as responses to mail questionnaires from 229 youths and 61 parents.[2] For the purposes of this paper, which require data on the youths at each time point but parent data only from 1965, our attention is restricted to the 1,272 parent-child pairs for which youth data from both years and parent data from 1965 are available.

These data are well suited for examining, in longitudinal fashion, the contributions of pre-adult socialization to the participation of young adults. To begin with, they allow direct measurement of important factors in the socialization process: the attitudes and behavior of parents in 1965, when the child was still in the home, and of the children as high school seniors. A second advantage of these materials is that they embrace a wide range of political activities, both electoral and non-electoral, for the young adults. Virtually the full range of participation can be charted for young adults from before their entry into the adult electorate to age 25 or 26. Finally, the data contain extensive information on the political orientations and other characteristics of young adults in 1973.

The dependent variable in the analysis is an index of political participation based on nine different activities. Five of them reflect involvement in election campaigns from 1965 to 1973, including referenda and contests for public office at all levels, by means of persuading others how to vote, attending meetings or rallies, displaying buttons or bumper stickers, donating money, and doing any other type of campaign work. The four remaining items cover non-electoral activities performed at any previous time: writing letters to the editor, contacting public officials, engaging in protests or demonstrations, and working with others to solve community problems. All nine activities were intercorrelated substantially with one another and loaded ($\geq$.35) on the first factor in a principal component factor analysis. Each activity possesses an equal weight in the index.[3]

The technique of path analysis (Asher, 1976; Blalock, 1968; Wright, 1934) is employed to estimate the linkages in the models developed in succeeding pages. Because of the special properties of the data, especially their

longitudinal and parent-child pair characteristics, the linkages can be assumed to be unidirectional, and recursive path modeling can be used. These properties also justify the ordering of variables that is a necessary precondition for causal inferences. While we recognize the perils of imputing causality, we shall speak in cause, effect terms. Our data permit the strongest assumptions about causality that can be made in non-experimental research. The specific estimation equations for each model are not presented in the text, but they can be derived easily from the arrow diagram for each model. They are multiple regression equations of each endogenous variable on the variables that are shown to directly determine it. Only standardized path coefficients (β's) are reported.

THE INTERGENERATIONAL SES MODEL

Several decades of empirical research have established socio-economic status as a major determinant of political participation. Higher status people have been found to be more active in political life than lower status people regardless of how status is measured (Milbrath and Goel, 1977) or the political system under study (Nie, Powell, and Prewitt, 1969; Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978). A status differential in participation is one of the uniformities of political life.

While there may be attributes of status per se that facilitate participation, it is generally conceded that status stands for factors more directly tied to activism. Verba and Nie (1972) identify civic orientations (e.g., psychological involvement in politics, political efficacy, political information, and commitment to the community) as the most important of these factors. Civic orientations increase the psychological benefits of participation and the resources for effective participation. Civic

orientations in turn are thought to be strongly influenced by status, especially education. While these orientations can not account fully for the empirical relationship between status and participation, they explain a sizable portion of it.

A status model of political activity, with civic orientations as mediating variables, is assigned explanatory primacy in the pioneering work of Verba and Nie (1972). They employed status as the primary predictor of participation and as a baseline against which to gauge the effects of other factors. These effects were often measured in terms of how much of the variance left unexplained by status they could account for. After the Verba and Nie study, what they titled the standard SES model stands as the foremost explanatory model of participation.

The primacy of the SES model is justifiable on several grounds. Theoretically, status seems a universally applicable concept, making it ideal for use in cross-national studies. Status also enjoys temporal precedence, and consequently may be assigned causal priority, over most other factors linked to participation. Even where another variable (such as organizational involvement) is more strongly related to participation, the fact that status is more a cause than an effect gives it the leading role in a causal model. While Verba and Nie (p. 137) refrained from making a case for the causal priority of status, their work implicitly makes the case for them. Finally, the universal relationship between status and participation also supports the primacy of the SES model by enabling status to qualify as probably the only cross-national baseline for studying participation.

So that our study can have at least one point of explicit comparison with the earlier work of Verba and Nie, the standard SES model was estimated as the

first step in the analysis. The status of the young adults in our study is measured by respondent educational attainment. Neither income nor occupation are meaningful indicators of status at this life stage, and they are omitted from the measure. The measure of civic orientations we employ is an additive index based on equal contributions of political efficacy, political knowledge, and political interest.[4]

The standard SES model fits the young adults well, albeit with less explanatory power than for the Verba and Nie sample of adults at all ages six years earlier. Figure 1 presents the comparable figures. The simple correlations between status and participation are virtually identical. (Virtually the same correlation, r=.36, appears as well for the parents in our study.) Differences in result between the studies are instead the work of divergent relationships between civic orientations and the other variables in the model. The standardized coefficients for the paths from status to these orientations and then from them to participation are considerably lower for the young adults.

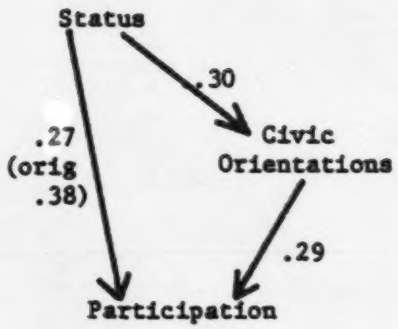
(Figure 1 here)

The effects of status are largely direct in our study but indirect in the Verba and Nie work. In path analysis, the direct effect of a variable is measured by the standardized coefficient for the path between it and the variable to be explained. The indirect effect is the sum of the products of standardized path coefficients for each separate compound path between these two variables through other variables. The indirect effect of status in Figure 1, for example, is the product of the coefficient for the paths between status and civic orientations and civic orientations and participation. Using this method, the total effects of status in the two models turn out to be about the

Figure 1

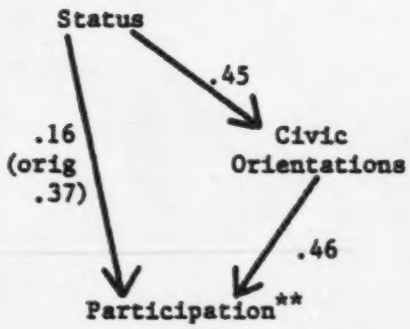
The Standard SES Model*

Young Adults, 1973



(R^2 = .22)

Adult Cross-section, 1967 Verba and Nie Study



(R^2 = .31)

* Entries are the path coefficients estimated for the model depicted by the arrows. All coefficients are significant at the .05 level. In parentheses is the zero order correlation. Residual path coefficients are eliminated for sake of clarity.

** This refers to overall participation. See Verba and Nie, p. 134.

Effects of Status, Young Adult Study

Direct = .27

Indirect, through civic orientations = (.30)(.29) = .09

Total = .27 + .09 = .36

Effects of Status, Verba and Nie Study

Direct = .16

Indirect, through civic orientations = (.45)(.46) = .21

Total = .16 + .21 = .37

same, but the paths taken to yield these effects are quite different.

The predominance of direct status effects for the young adults implies that their political activity must be explained primarily by factors inherent in status--here, measured by education. For example, higher education equips people with the resources for political activity, especially reasoning and communications skills. An alternative explanation views educational status as an indicator of opportunities for participation. College campuses in the late 1960s and early 1970s spawned countless protest movements and energized many political campaigns. Thus higher education may reflect the unparalleled opportunities for participation offered to this generation. These opportunities were so great (and the group pressures to seize them so strong) that they may have attracted to participation many young people who lacked the "requisite" civic orientations, thereby lowering the relationship between these attitudes and activity among the young adults.

This analysis illustrates the importance of status for participation in the earliest stages of adulthood. Even before many of the young adults have settled down, their educational attainment has exerted a strong impact on their political activity. This finding is all the more significant in light of the restricted variation in education among members of the youth sample. By sampling from the population of high school seniors in 1965, about a quarter of the age cohort is eliminated. Almost all of the absentees failed to achieve a high school diploma. If they had been included in the study population, an even more substantial status-participation relationship might have emerged.

With the parent-child socialization panel, we can move beyond the rather static SES model to probe the origins of adult status and civic orientations

themselves, thereby broadening our perspective on the development of political activism to include factors in pre-adult socialization. Potentially the most important of these factors is the parental contribution to young adult status. One of the verities of social life is that status is remarkably stable across generations in the same family (Blau and Duncan, 1967). Parent status may be a powerful force behind the operation of the standard SES model.

Parent status can contribute to adult political activism in several ways. As suggested above, it is a principal determinant of the child's own status. The effects of parent status also can be indirect, operating through the effects of child-rearing practices on child orientations. Lipset (1960), among others, has emphasized the importance of the practices typically found in middle class families for the development of democratic political orientations. Evidence of a relationship between status and such orientations as political efficacy can be found as early as ages eight and nine for American children (Easton and Dennis, 1967). Parent status also may influence the child's political orientations through placement of the child in a social milieu which encourages civic involvement (Connell, 1972). In each case, the effects of parent status, like those of the individual's own status, are mediated by civic orientations.

These theoretical expectations are formalized in the intergenerational SES model presented in Figure 2. This model builds upon the standard SES model by adding measures of parent status and pre-adult (youth) civic orientations. Parent status is operationalized as educational attainment of the head of the household. Education is used as the sole measure of parent status to make it equivalent with the young adult measure. Head of household education is used, however, because it is a more reliable indicator of family educational status

for the parent generation than is respondent education. The educational opportunities for females in this generation were impeded severely by the social norms of an earlier time. These norms have all but vanished for the younger generation, making it unnecessary to resort to the male's education to measure family status. The other new variable in the model, youth civic orientations, is an index based on 1965 measurements of virtually the same items involved in the 1973 index.[5]

(Figure 2 here)

Parent status exerts a substantial influence on offspring political participation through the intergenerational SES model. These effects are indirect in large part, passing through both the child's civic orientations and status. While the indirect effects through the child's status exceed those through civic attitudes, both are sizable. Direct effects of parent status emerge too, but they are relatively less important.

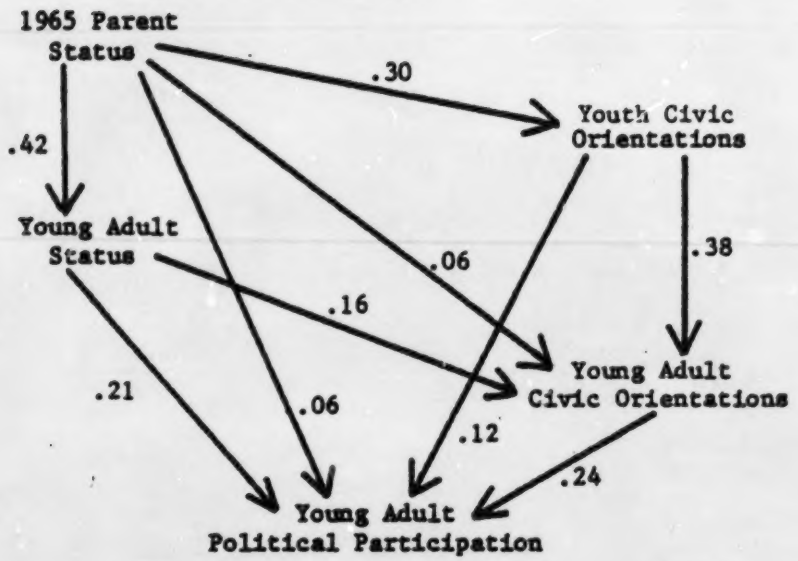
This analysis establishes the intermediate role of the standard SES model in explaining political activity.[6] Neither status nor civic orientations are self determined, springing to life only after childhood. Rather, the roots of both lie in parent status and the economic, social, and psychological resources for later life that it provides. The standard SES model tells only the most recent part of the story of the development of adult political participation.

THE PARENT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION MODEL

Even though the extent of their influence is often disputed, parents are undoubtedly the most effective agents of political socialization (Beck, 1977). We have seen already how this influence may be exercised through parent status characteristics. The influence measured in the intergenerational SES model,

Figure 2

The Intergenerational SES Model*



(R^2 = .23)

* Entries are the path coefficients estimated for the model depicted by the arrows. Solid lines indicate significance at the .05 level. Dashed lines indicate coefficients that were estimated and found to be insignificant. Residual path coefficients are eliminated for the sake of clarity.

Effects of Parent Status

Direct = .06

Indirect, through civic orientations =
(.30)(.38)(.24) + (.06)(.24) + (.30)(.12) = .08

Indirect, through young adult status =
(.42)(.16)(.24) + (.42)(.21) = .10

Total = .06 + .08 + .10 = .24

however, is the product of forces that are largely non-political in nature, even if their effects are political. An alternative approach to parental influence is to focus attention on explicitly political characteristics of parents and family life. Socialization to political participation may be even more effective through directly political influence.

Perhaps the most appealing source of possible parent political influence is parent political involvement itself. Parent participation in political life may nurture similar behavior by children. The impact may be direct. Through the mechanism of imitation, the offspring of activists may adopt a stance of activism themselves. Biographical accounts of political leaders and period pieces on student radicals in the youth generation (Keniston, 1968) provide numerous examples of people who seem to have copied their parents' political styles.

Imitation surely is not the only mechanism operating in these families. Parent political activity may politicize the home in varied ways, contributing powerfully to childrens' own outlooks on politics. Furthermore, whether or not they participate directly in political life, parents who show an interest in politics and share this interest with their children may sow the seeds of activity in the orientations towards politics they inculcate in their children.

These theoretical expectations are contained in the parent political participation model presented in Figure 3. Parent participation is measured by a simple index based on the number of campaign activities performed by the parent in the decade preceding 1965.[7] Although the measure is restricted to one of three recognized dimensions of non-voting activity, this dimension has been found to be highly correlated (r=.88) with overall participation and to exhibit a strong

relationship (r=.52) with communal activity, the second important dimension (Verba and Nie, 1972, p. 75). A more troubling restriction of the measure is that it is based on the participation of only one parent. Where one parent is active and the other inactive, parental contributions will be poorly specified and the estimates of parent-child relationships depressed.

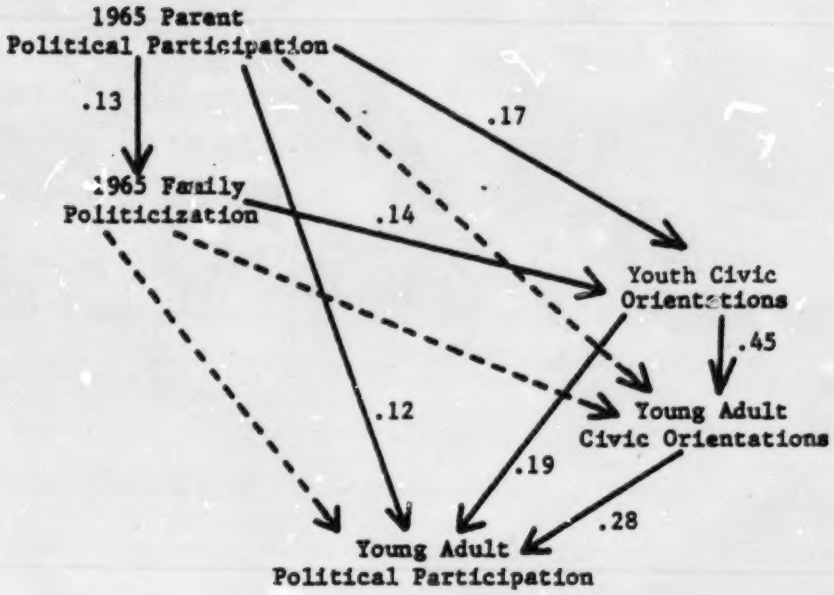
(Figure 3 here)

The nature of family politicization is more resistant to measurement. Our objective is to represent the degree of family involvement in political life. A variety of characteristics reflect this: parent interest in politics, family discussions about politics, and joint family attention to the media concerning politics. Perceptions of the amount of family involvement will be different for parent and child. We use child perceptions in 1965, largely because of an interest in reconstructing the environment as the child experiences it. The measure of family politicization, therefore, is an additive index based on child perceptions of each parent's interest, of the amount of family political conversation, and of the degree to which parents and child gathered political information together through television and radio.[8]

The path coefficients for this model evidence substantial parent contributions to young adult political activity through political socialization. Parent participation influences young adult participation directly and also indirectly through family politicization and civic orientations. The direct effects are twice the indirect effects, suggesting that pure imitation without an attitudinal boost is a powerful socialization force. Socialization by example is apparently more important than socialization by other means where parent participation effects are concerned.

Figure 3

The Parent Political Participation Model*



(R^2 = .20)

* Entries are the path coefficients estimated for the model depicted by the arrows. Solid lines indicate significance at the .05 level. Dashed lines indicate coefficients that were estimated and found to be insignificant. Residual path coefficients are eliminated for the sake of clarity.

Effects of Parent Political Participation

Direct = .12

Indirect, through civic orientations =
(.17)(.45)(.28) + (.17)(.19) = .05

Indirect, through family politicization =
(.13)(.14)(.45)(.28) + (.13)(.14)(.19) = .00

Total = .12 + .05 + .00 = .17

Yet parent participation does exert some impact on young adult activity through the indirect paths. It appears to help stimulate the home political environment and foster the development of civic orientations, both directly and through the environment. The relationships, however, are not very strong. In many cases parents are active without any apparent impact on family political life or child civic orientations, and families are politicized without influencing child attitudes. Because of this, the indirect effects of parent participation can be no more than modest at best.

Several explanations for the pale indirect effects of family politicization come to mind. The full effects of family politicization may not appear until after the young adult life stage. While its relationship to child civic orientations is immutable, politicization may have even stronger relationships with later measurements of the adult variables. A more persuasive explanation is that, as indicative of a relatively passive form of involvement in political life, politicization provides some attitudinal support but little activist predilection for later participation. That activist orientations themselves are important is an hypothesis that will be evaluated presently to some degree by examining the effects of non-political parent activity.

Another noticeable feature of the parent participation model is the absence of significant coefficients for three of the four paths to young adult orientations and behavior. Pre-adult socialization experiences exert no <u>direct</u> influence on the young adult civic orientations in this model. Their effects instead are contained in civic orientations developed during adolescence and carried into adulthood. Furthermore, family politicization has no direct effect on young adult participation. These paths can be omitted from the model without violating the assumption that residuals are uncorrelated with

explanatory variables.

The parent political participation model does not fare as well as the intergenerational SES model in accounting for the political activity of young adults. While the models achieve comparable results by the R^2 standard, the central role of civic orientations in each makes this comparison misleading. A more appropriate comparison involves the total effects of the primary variable in each model. This is the portion of the simple correlation between participation and the primary variable that is due to the model. By this standard, the intergenerational SES model is clearly more powerful, primarily because of a more substantial mediating role of civic orientations.

The parent political participation model contributes nonetheless to an understanding of the roots of political activity. It would contribute even more if its key components were measured with greater reliability. The family politicization variable in particular seems likely to be plagued by reliability problems. By contrast, the measurements of SES model variables, particularly education, are surely much more reliable -- especially young adult education because it was assessed in the context of specific questions about college life. Corrections for attenuation in Figures 2 and 3 would probably more than even out the imbalance in explanatory power between the two models.

THE PARENT NON-POLITICAL PARTICIPATION MODEL

In attempting to account for the insubstantial indirect effects of parent political participation, we proposed that an activist orientation to political life may be the really important legacy of the parents. This is to suggest that parental activism, not necessary <u>political</u> activism, is a key causal factor. If so, then any sort of activism by the parents will make important contributions to young adult political participation. In this section, we

explore the impact of the parent's organizational involvement.

America has long been known for the rich organizational life of its communities. The pronounced organizational involvement of Americans has struck foreign observers as a unique feature of American life and a primary reason why political democracy has flourished here. Given this reputation for organizational involvement, it may come as a surprise to find that 38 percent of the respondents in the Verba and Nie study (1972, p. 176) reported no organizational memberships and only 39 percent claimed more than one membership. These figures show that involvement varies substantially in the adult population, permitting organizational involvement to be a possible contributor to the even less frequent participation in politics.

If parent activism per se promotes political activity in children, then parent levels of organizational involvement should have an influence on the political participation of young adults. This influence may travel along several paths. Children may copy their parents by joining organizations themselves, and then transfer this involvement into the political realm. The mechanism of identification may work as well outside of politics as in it. Transfer too is a familiar process in political socialization. Participation in organizational life also may provide the experience in association that makes political participation easier and thus more common (Tocqueville, 1949, p. 115). Indeed, the recruitment mechanisms of local politics often promote such a transfer, as candidates and campaign workers are recruited through the organizational infrastructure of the community.

A second indirect path of influence for parent organizational involvement may lie through the development of civic orientations that in turn foster subsequent political activity. By providing opportunities for influence on

group decisions, activity in organizations should give people confidence that they have the personal capacity to affect the world around them, a key component of the civic orientation index. In their five-nation study, Almond and Verba (1963) found support for this hypothesis. Participation outside of politics (in the family, the school, and the work place) increased the individual's subjective competence. Subjective competence is one component of political efficacy, and it is the component used to measure efficacy in 1965.

A third possibility is that parent organizational involvement has a direct impact on young adult political activity. The causal mechanisms involved here can include simple identification, as parent activism in whatever form induces political activism in children. On the other hand, the mechanisms can be very subtle and complicated. For example, parent involvement may spring from an activist orientation towards the world. This orientation may be passed on directly to the child, to result in political as well as organizational activism in later life. Since we have no measure of activist orientations other than their manifestations in behavior, however, this explanation can not be subjected to empirical testing.

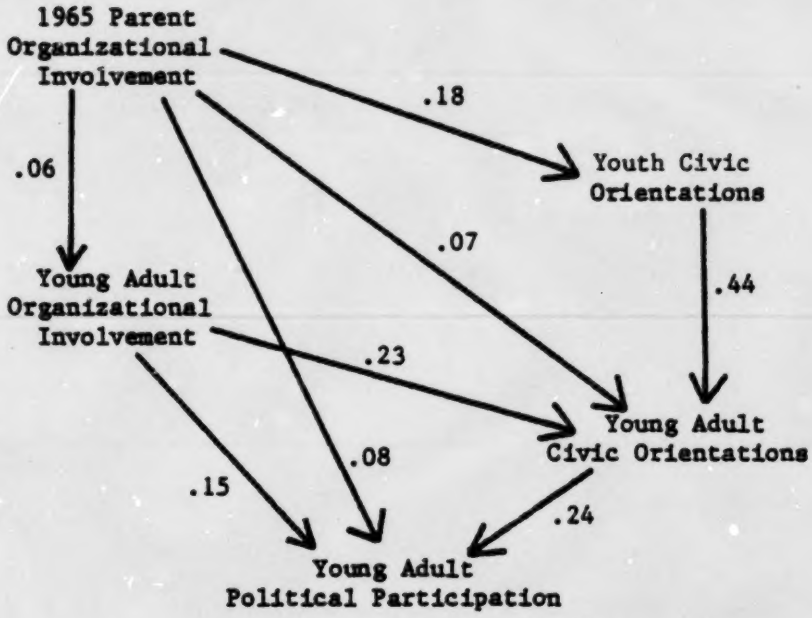
These theoretical expectations are combined in the parent non-political participation model presented in Figure 4. The civic orientation and political participation variables in this model are the same as in previous models. The two new variables, parent and young adult organizational involvement, are indexes based on a count of the number of organizations to which the respondent belonged.[9]

(Figure 4 here)

In preliminary analyses, activity beyond membership in the organization was required to earn points on these indexes, following the observation of Verba

Figure 4

The Parent Non-Political Participation Model*



(R^2 = .21)

* Entries are the path coefficients estimated for the model depicted by the arrows. Solid lines indicate significance at the .05 level. Dashed lines indicate coefficients that were estimated and found to be insignificant. Residual path coefficients are eliminated for the sake of clarity.

Effects of Parent Non-Political Participation

Direct = .08

Indirect, through civic orientations =
(.18)(.44)(.24) + (.07)(.24) = .04

Indirect, through young adult organizational involvement =
(.06)(.15) + (.06)(.23)(.24) = .01

Total = .08 + .04 + .01 = .13

and Nie (1972, p. 185) that activism has a more pronounced effect than mere membership. But our analysis produced a different result. The membership-based index exhibited stronger relationships to both parent and youth political participation than the activism-based index, although activism was more strongly correlated than membership between parents and children. To maximize the impact of organizational involvement on political activity, therefore, we chose the membership-based measure.

Parent influence through organizational involvement follows each suggested path. The path through young adult organizational involvement is the weakest of the three. The indirect path through civic orientations, while not substantial, is stronger. Organizational membership of both parents and young adults appears to enhance young adult civic orientations.

The path of direct impact for parent organizational involvement is the most impressive of all. Direct effects are almost twice the sum of the indirect effects. This result provides empirical support for the identification and activist orientation hypotheses. Identification consists of an almost mechanical copying of parent behaviors. The transmission of activist orientations, on the other hand, involves the development of broad orientations towards interaction with one's environment. The former is apt to be conditioned, the latter reflective and philosophical. Because the empirical relationships predicted by the two hypotheses are the same, however, we can not distinguish between them with the materials at hand.

An important feature of the estimates in Figure 4 is the absence of a path between pre-adult civic orientations and later adult organizational involvement. The simple correlation between these variables is a meager .05,

and the path coefficient is an even less impressive .04. Youth civic orientations apparently do not influence non-political involvement in adulthood. This implies that transfer from the political to the non-political realm is unlikely. On theoretical grounds no path was expected here, and it is gratifying to find empirical confirmation for this assumption.

Overall, the total effects of parent organizational membership through this model are far weaker than those attributed to the primary variables in either of the preceding models. These effects are depressed in part by the barely significant β coefficient for the path between the two organizational involvement variables themselves. A weak path here undermines the identification hypothesis to a degree, because identification should occur more for the directly comparable activity than for political activity.

The unexpectedly weak path between the organization involvement variables may result from an anomalous characteristic of the particular population under study. For most people the mid-twenties are a stage in the life cycle at which opportunities for involvement in community organizational life are only beginning to open up. American youth experience an unusually prolonged transition to adulthood. While no longer adolescents, some "rites of adulthood" have been delayed for many of our respondents by college life. The college campus spawns its own community, centered around a youth sub-culture and typically isolated from the community at large. Thus, at a time when non-college young adults may be joining the mainstream of community life, their higher status peers are insulated from it.

The young adults whose opportunities for organizational involvement are restricted in this way are precisely those who would be expected to carry a family tradition of involvement. Parent organizational involvement is

correlated strongly (r=.42) with parent status. Under normal conditions, a correlation of similar magnitude should be expected for the young adults. The palid relationship that emerges instead signals abnormality. Passage of time should remove the abnormality and strengthen the impact of young adult status and parent organizational involvement on adult political activity. Given more time, that is, highly educated youth should enter the mainstream of community life, taking full advantage of the opportunities there for organizational involvement.

These speculations may be expanded to contrast the opportunity structures for political and organizational involvement in early adulthood. College campuses typically are devoid of the organizational life which characterizes the "adult" world. They contain few service clubs or neighborhood associations, and few students join labor unions. Campus organizational life instead resembles that of the secondary school. Organizations abound, but they are student centered, and membership usually is restricted to students. There is little opportunity for the college student to interact with a broader cross section of the society.

By contrast, opportunities for participation in adult political life (especially protests and campaigning, two essential ingrediants of our measure) were unprecedented on college campuses during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Jennings and Niemi, 1981). College attendance as a result probably accelerated, rather than impeded, the operations of the political participation model. Therefore, a focus on political participation of only young adults does little damage to the political factors in the models but may materially reduce the explanatory power of involvement in community organizations.

THE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MODEL

The school also is an important agent of political socialization in America. American schools have been assigned special responsibilities for civic education, highlighted by their mandate to Americanize the children of immigrants who inundated the nation's large cities. In the earlier grades, classroom life is full of rituals designed to inculcate valued political orientations, such as patriotism, allegiance, and support for democratic norms. In the later grades, virtually all schools require courses in government or civics, as well as American history, usually as an obligation under state laws. Secondary schools also offer a variety of extra-curricular activities and foster a degree of student self government, guided in part by an assumption that they serve as laboratories for civic training.

Yet, for all their attention to civic training, it is doubtful that most aspects of school socialization can account for <u>differences</u> in adult political participation. Curriculum and classroom rituals are relatively uniform throughout American schools. Exposure to these aspects of school life, at least for those who have reached the last year in high school, is a constant rather than a variable. Experiences shared by all can not lead to wide variations in political activity. Nor does the quantity of these experiences seem to matter. Even the sheer number of civics courses taken bears little relationship to student political orientations, primarily because its content is redundant for all but a few students (Langton and Jennings, 1969; Ehman, 1969). It exhibits no relationship to young adult political participation in our study (r=.00).

A more likely source of school influence on political participation is extracurricular activities and the political life of the school. Students vary

considerably in the extent to which they are involved in these activities, permitting this form of school civic training to be received differentially rather than uniformly.

Involvement in school activities can be expected to influence later participation in several ways. First and foremost, as an intended result of civic training, it may inculcate the civic orientations that seem to foster adult political activity. Previous research yields a mixed verdict, however, on the impact of this involvement on political attitudes. Almond and Verba (1963, pp. 252-263) found that subjective competence was somewhat higher among respondents in each of five nations who said they had participated in school decisions. But analysis of the 1965 wave of our study revealed that levels of participation in extracurricular activities had no direct bearing on student political orientations (Jennings and Niemi, 1974, p. 230 n). School activities also may affect later participation by providing the adolescent with direct experience in political association and interaction which can be drawn upon subsequently to ease entry into adult activism. A third possible path of influence for school activities involves its role in implanting activist orientations -- predispositions that cannot be measured with the materials at hand. Involvement in school activities, like parental participation, may help to shape the individual's style of interaction with the external world.

These theoretical expectations are contained in the school activities model presented in Figure 5. The only new variable in this model is an index of high school activities constructed from a series of items measuring student participation in school politics and extracurricular activities. Respondents were asked if they had voted in school elections and why they had done so, if they had run for office or helped someone campaign, and if they had won an

election. They were also asked if they belonged to different types of extracurricular organizations: school publications groups; hobby, subject, and occupation clubs; and neighborhood, religious, and service organizations; as well as organizations of any other type. In constructing the index of school activities, one point was awarded for each school political activity but voting and for each organizational membership. An extra point was awarded for being a club officer and for each political justification offered for voting in school elections.[10]

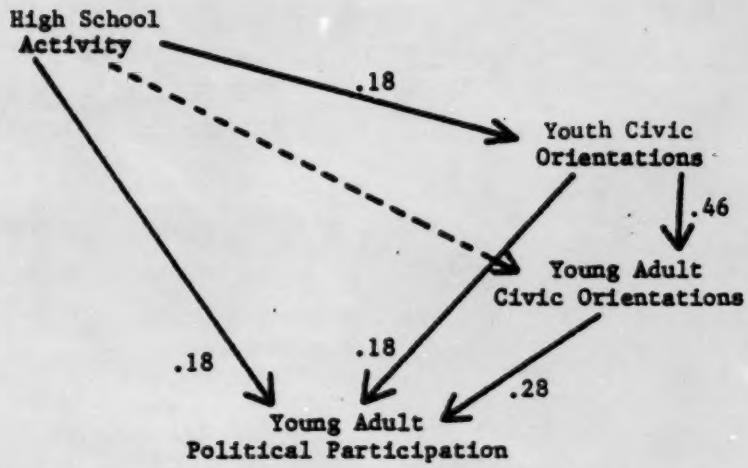
(Figure 5 here)

Previous involvement in high school activities exerts a substantial influence on the political participation of young adults. These effects are both direct and indirect. By far the most substantial are the direct effects, outweighing the indirect effects by a margin of three to one. Apparently the experience gained by involvement in school activities, and perhaps even the activist style that it encourages, contributes much more to young adult political participation than the civic orientations nurtured by involvement. While these civic orientations continue to influence adult activism, their weak relationship to school activism limits the explanatory power of this path. Ironically, given the emphasis of schools on cognitive development, school activities seem to promote "doing" more than "thinking".

School activities exert a relatively strong influence overall on young adult participation. Their total effects equal those of parent status in the intergenerational SES model and exceed those of the primary parent variables in the two interceding models. Based on this evidence, the role of schools in the socialization process needs to be reconsidered. Where the student can "elect" exposure to a particular kind of civic training, such as activities, the school

Figure 5

The School Activities Model*



(R^2 = .22)

* Entries are the path coefficients estimated for the model depicted by the arrows. Solid lines indicate significance at the .05 level. Dashed lines indicate coefficients that were estimated and found to be insignificant. Residual path coefficients are eliminated for the sake of clarity.

Effects of School Activities

Direct = .18

Indirect, through youth civic orientations =
(.18)(.18) + (.18)(.46)(.28) = .06

Total = .18 + .06 = .24

can have an impact on adult political behavior. What limits school influence more generally in explaining variations in political behavior is that most kinds of civic training are required, not electives.

THE COMBINED EFFECTS MODEL

The effects of childhood socialization on young adult political participation have been treated through analysis of four separate models. Each model has considered a different source of influence: parent status, parent political participation, parent organizational involvement, and school activities. Family politicization and youth civic orientations have been built into these models as well, although their impact is assumed to be intermediary rather than primary.

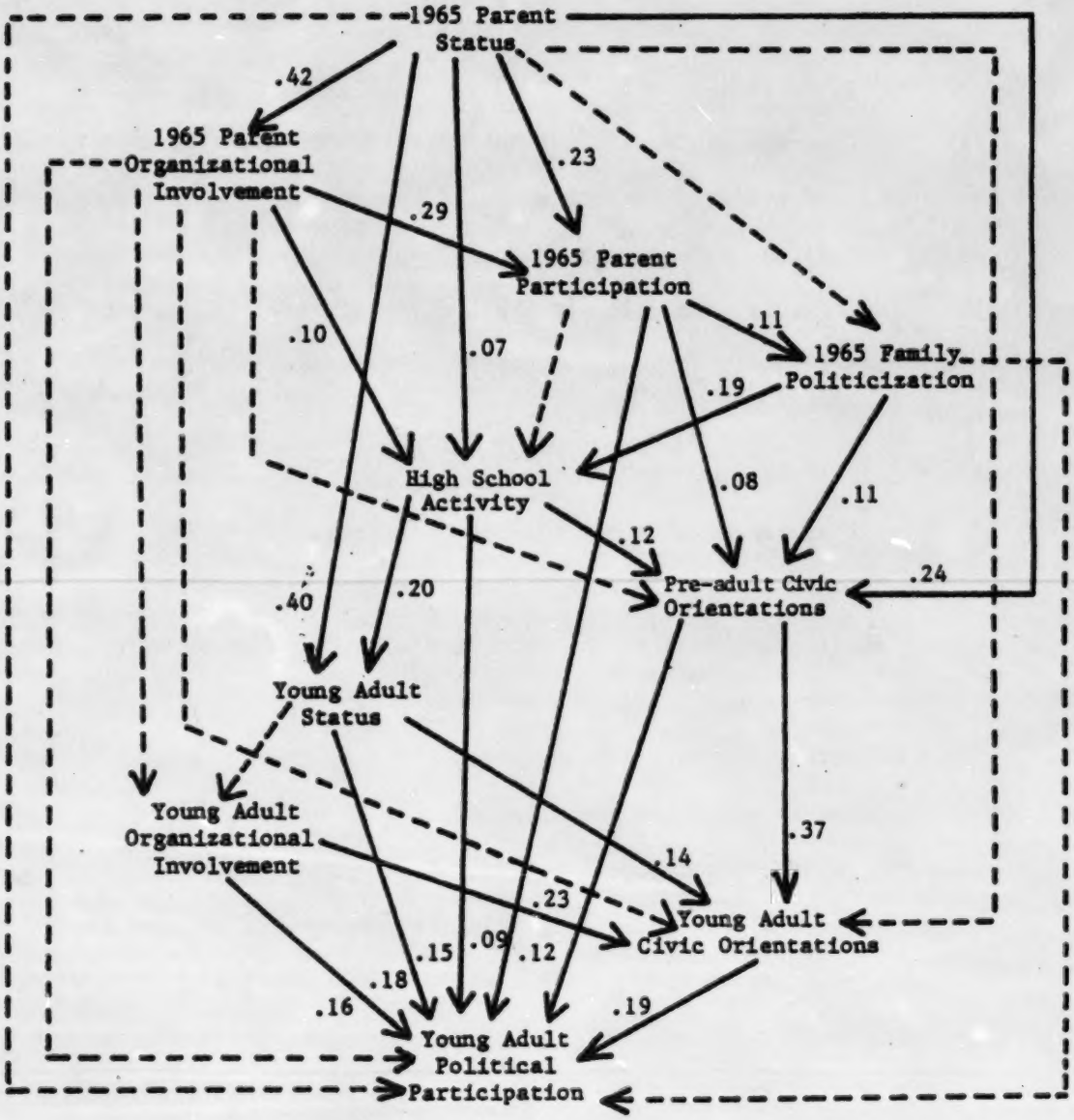
When treated separately, these models ignore both the reinforcing and competing aspects of political socialization in America. Paths to young adult participation in each model, for example, pass through civic orientations. The relative contributions of each of the primary variables to these civic orientations need to be specified. Furthermore, the primary variables in these models are themselves interdependent. To gauge the overall role of each aspect of socialization we have considered, therefore, it is necessary to combine the four models into a single model.

This combined socialization effects model is presented in Figure 6. It embodies numerous assumptions about the magnitudes and directions of relationships between variables. The paths which are set to zero leave degrees of freedom for use in assumption testing. Because the rationales for these assumptions are not implied as clearly in the theory as was the case with the simple models, we shall consider them at length below.

(Figure 6 here)

Figure 6

The Combined Effects Model*



* Entries are the path coefficients estimated for the model depicted by the arrows. Solid lines indicate significance at the .05 level. Dashed lines indicate coefficients that were estimated and found to be insignificant. Residual path coefficients are eliminated for the sake of clarity.

The directional assumptions are based in large part on the temporal ordering of the variables. The simplest distinction in ordering is between variables that reflect 1965 characteristics (and were measured then) and those representing traits (and measured) eight years later. A further distinction can be made in the 1965 data based on whether the variable involves parent or child characteristics. Parent variables are undeniably antecedent to child variables in a socialization model.

Causal ordering may be established between additional pairs of variables based on the age of the characteristics they measure. Parent status has had the longest life of any characteristic in the model, having been established for most people at least twenty years prior to the 1965 measurement. Parent organizational involvement and political participation are the next most enduring traits. While established well after status, they undoubtedly preceded high school activities and the nature of family politicization as perceived by the high school senior.

The causal ordering of the temporally equivalent variables is more difficult to establish because it requires some theoretical judgments about the nature of causal flows. We assume, for example, that the flow of socialization influence is from the non-political to the political realm. Thus, civic orientations are the result of school activity and organizational political involvement, and organizational involvement is seen as cause rather than effect of political participation. Social life presumably affects political life much more than political life affects social. We assume also that young adult political participation follows young adult civic orientations because these orientations to a large degree ($r=.47$) are carried over from childhood.

Another set of assumptions eliminates in advance certain paths from the model on the grounds that their theoretically-expected values should be near zero. These assumptions were represented by the absence of arrows between variable pairs in the model diagrams presented earlier. For example, no direct linkage of parent organizational involvement and either family politicization or young adult status was expected. Also parent status was assumed to have no direct impact on young adult organizational involvement, and four variables -- family politicization, youth civic orientations, school activities, and parent political participation -- were presumed a priori to lack direct ties to young adult status. Finally, youth civic orientations were to have no direct effect on young adult organizational involvement.

The assumptions of no direct paths between certain pairs of variables can be tested empirically by examining the appropriate partial correlations. For each assumption to be valid, the partial correlation between a pair of variables, controlling for variables in all paths between them, must approach zero. For the paths involving organizational involvement, the assumptions are supported with but the single exception discussed below. No direct paths exist between young adult involvement and family politicization, youth civic orientations, school activities, parent political participation, and parent status. Nor is there a direct path between parent organizational involvement and family politicization, again as expected.

On the other hand, the assumptions of no paths between young adult status and several temporally prior variables are of dubious validity. Parent participation (political and non-political), school activities, youth civic attitudes, and family politicization should have no direct influence on young adult status. Yet the partial correlations for all of them with status

are significant. While three of these partials are small enough that we can continue to assume that no direct path exists, the partials with senior civic orientations (r=.33, controlling for school activities, parent political participation, parent involvement, family politicization, and parent status) and school activities (r=.17, controlling for the same prior variables except school activities of course, plus youth civic orientations) are too large to ignore.

The emergence of significant paths where they are not expected on theoretical grounds poses both a methodological and substantive problem for the combined model. If they are omitted because of theoretical considerations, the assumption that error terms are uncorrelated with endogenous variables in the model is violated. On the other hand, if they are included to avoid methodological problems, the model is misspecified theoretically. Asher (1976, p. 22) suggests that this dilemma be resolved by allowing theoretical considerations to dominate where we have confidence in the theory. We have followed his suggestion here.

The path between youth civic orientations and young adult status is left out of the model because it is inconceivable that the former could determine the latter. This relationship, instead, is undoubtedly the result of the impact of some unmeasured variable on both attitudes and status.[11] The path between school activities and status, however, is retained in the combined model. Involvement in school activities can increase educational achievement levels. It reflects a commitment to the school as a social and educational institution, and this may encourage further schooling. It also shows a dimension of achievement that may be important for later scholastic and occupational performance. High school activity is often used as a predictor of

college success by college admissions officers. Even in the unlikely event that activity is uncorrelated with scholastic performance, its inclusion among the criteria for college admissions makes it a contributor to educational status by allowing it to affect one's chances of college admission and financial aid.

Finally, three other paths are eliminated from the combined model because their coefficients were insignificant in the individual models. They are the paths to young adult civic orientations from parent political participation, school activities, and family politicization. These variables have only indirect influence on the adult attitudes. Most of this influence is carried by youth civic attitudes. Their effects remain insignificant, it should be added, even when they are included in the regression equations to estimate the combined model.

The path coefficients for the combined model shed considerable light on the contributions of pre-adult socialization to young adult political participation. The model explains 28 percent of the variance in participation overall. Given the unreliability of certain key explanatory variables, and the limited focus on socialization variables only[12], this is an impressive result. Even with the young adult status variable removed, the combined model still accounts for considerably more variance in young adult participation than does the standard SES model.

When the effects of the primary variables are recomputed for the originally posited paths using the path coefficients from the combined model, parent status (effects = .17) and school activities (effects = .17) emerge as the major factors in young adult political participation.[13] The effects of parent political participation are smaller (effects = .11), and a part of

them can be traced to the prior influence of parent status. Only parent organizational involvement vanishes completely as an explanation of participation. Its direct effects in the separate model can be accounted for by parent status.

These results suggest that parent activism, of either a political or non-political sort, makes modest contributions to the later political activism of children. Rather, parent status, not usually considered an important socialization variable (but see Connell, 1972), and the school are the major socialization influences on participation.[14] The young political activists of the late 1960s and early 1970s could have been identified fairly well in 1965, knowing what we now know, on the basis of their family status and involvement in school politics and extracurricular activities.

Of the many other interesting results in Figure 6, the ones involving civic orientations are most worthy of discussion. Early civic orientations play a pivotal role in our socialization theories of participation as the crucial intermediaries for all of the primary socialization variables. They continue to play this role in the combined model. Some of the influence of each primary variable is the result of its impact on youth civic orientations which, in turn, are carried into adulthood to affect political participation there. Because these civic orientations were developed initially in childhood, their contributions too may be counted as effects of the socialization process.

When the techniques employed for estimating effects are applied to pre-adult civic orientations, their effect turns out to be substantial. Their direct and indirect (through young adult civic orientations) effect (.19) surpasses that of even parent status, although it must be conceded that a small portion (.02) of that total reflects the indirect influence of parent status. The effects of

youth civic orientations are mostly direct. Adolescent attitudes themselves exert an important influence on adult behavior, without being mediated by adult civic attitudes. That this effect is direct rather than indirect may be a consequence of a temporary departure from earlier civic attitudes by some young adults, perhaps due to strong period forces. If so, then we should expect the impact of youth civic orientations to become more indirect as the period forces abate and the young adults revert to their earlier orientations in the years to come -- if indeed such a reversion occurs.

Figure 6 contains many other interesting results, but we shall ignore them for the most part because they are remote from a primary concern with socialization factors. In passing, though, two relationships deserve brief mention. First is the surprising absence of a path between the non-political participation of young adults and their parents. We suggested earlier that this linkage might tighten in the future as the young adults mature. For now the failure of organizationally involved parents to have stimulated similar involvement in their offspring remains theoretically perplexing.

A second notable result is the near independence of school activity from the other kinds of participation and from parent status. Only family politicization is related substantially to school activities. It is ironic that the major impact of this family variable is felt outside the family domain and that neither parent activism nor status have much effect on youth school involvement. School activism seems to offer an important <u>alternate</u> path to adult participation. This is additional evidence of the important role played by the school in the socialization of participation.

CONCLUSION

We have evaluated four different pathways to participation with origins in the process of pre-adult socialization. Taken individually, each can be shown to affect adult political participation. Parent status and youth involvement in high school activities have the greatest impact. The effects of parent status are carried primarily by the child's civic orientations and later adult status, but those of high school activities are largely direct. Parent participation has a weaker impact in general, most of it direct, and participation in politics is more important than participation outside of politics.

When the four pathways are combined in a single model to reflect the connections among them, all remain important except the one from parent organizational involvement. The combined model also reveals the crucial role of civic orientations in converting pre-adult experiences into later participation. Civic orientations are the primary carriers of pre-adult political learning.

That pre-adult socialization factors are related to adult political participation illustrates the weakness of explanations of participation based entirely on adult characteristics. Parents and schools leave a legacy for later participation. While it may be embedded in certain adult characteristics (e.g., status), the legacy must be regarded as the dominant influence because of its temporal precedence to contemporaneous forces. To be sure, adult characteristics remain important contributors to participation. All that our results require is that socialization influences be considered along with them in explaining political participation from a socio-psychological perspective.

These results have implications as well for the biases of political

participation. It is well established that the activists in American politics "sing with a strong upper-class accent", to quote Schattschneider's (1960, p. 35) metaphor. While the results of our study hardly dispute this point, they also demonstrate that there are alternative paths to participation which do not involve status. Many factors in the home and school operate to counteract the status bias of participation -- factors which themselves are only weakly related to status. The importance of status in accounting for the activity of young adults, however, is a sign that these countervaling forces may be eroding. Perhaps this is one consequence of the weakened role of political party organizations as recruiting agents for political life and the parallel decline in material inducements for participation.

The findings of this study can be used also to resurrect the assumption that childhood socialization affects adult attitudes and behavior. This central premise of socialization research has been challenged vigorously by Searing, Schwartz, and Lind (1973) and Searing, Wright, and Rabinowitz (1976). Their work reveals the weak conceptualization and underlying myopia of some socialization research. Because of the absence of longitudinal data connecting childhood to adulthood, though, neither challengers nor defenders have been able heretofore to test the questioned assumptions directly. We believe that our results rebut this challenge where political participation is concerned. At least for young adults in the late 1960s and early 1970s, political activity was structured to a significant degree by pre-adult forces. If such an effect appears for this form of political behavior, there is a good chance it may appear for other attitudes and behaviors as well.

FOOTNOTES

*We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Paul Lopatto and Jesse B. Taintor in the data analysis and of Lara Hornung, Anneliese Reich, and Mary Schneider in the preparation of this paper.

[1]Milbrath and Goel's (1977) compendium of research findings on participation, for example, contains no references to activism for material reasons. Yet, Clark and Wilson (1961) include it as an important motivation for involvement.

[2]The study was conducted by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan under the direction of M. Kent Jennings. The 1965 youth sample is representative of the population of 1965 high school seniors and their parents. The high re-interview rate for each generation in the study (81 percent for the young and 75 percent for the parents) enables the 1973 sample to continue to represent this population eight years later. Furthermore, detailed comparisons, based on 1965 characteristics, indicate very little difference between those respondents re-interviewed and not re-interviewed in 1973. See Jennings and Niemi (1981) for specific details.

[3]See Beck and Jennings (1979) for an extended discussion of the construction of this measure.

[4]The index score for each respondent is the sum of standardized scores on a single-item measure of political interest, a six-question political knowledge test, and a two-item index of the governmental responsiveness component of political efficacy. The efficacy questions are: "I don't think public officials care much what people like me think" and "People like me don't have any say about what the government does." The three components of the civic orientations index are significantly related to one another ($r \geq .23$) and load

well (loadings$\geq$.25) on the first factor of a principal component factor analysis. Two other efficacy questions (see Footnote 5), measuring the subjective competence component of efficacy, were omitted from our measure because the index they formed was only weakly correlated with political knowledge and political interest (r=.10 in each case). Subjective competence does not belong on the same dimension with knowledge and interest. Furthermore, previous research has found the subjective competence variables to be highly unreliable and unstable. For extensive empirical justification of this separation of the efficacy components, as well as evidence on the unreliability of the subjective competence items, see McPherson, Welch, and Clark (1977).

[5]This index score is the sum of standardized scores on measures of political interest, political knowledge, and the subjective competence component of efficacy. Interest and knowledge are measured with the same questions as before. Because the questions used for our 1973 measure of efficacy were not asked in 1965, however, entirely different questions had to be used: "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on" and "Voting is the only way that people like me can have any say about how the government runs things." The three components of the 1965 civic orientations index are significantly correlated with one another (r$\geq$.26) and load well (loadings$\geq$.51) on the first factor of a principal component factor analysis.

The efficacy components of the 1965 and 1973 civic orientations variables are not equivalent in literal terms. The four traditional efficacy questions divide into two pairs under careful scrutiny (Balch, 1974; McPherson, Welch, and Clark, 1977). The pair reflecting subjective competence were asked in both

1965 and 1973, while the government responsiveness questions were asked only in 1973. While we could have forced literal equivalence by using the competence items in both years, it would have resulted in an efficacy measure based on highly unreliable items. Literal equivalence would also lower the overall equivalence in meaning between the two efficacy indexes. The 1965 and 1973 subjective competence indexes are weakly related (r=.11). A far more substantial longitudinal relationship (r=.31) appears between subjective competence in 1965 and government responsiveness in 1973. Our decision to use the more reliable responsiveness items in 1973 preserves the over time stability of the efficacy index in spite of violating the principle of literal equivalence. This decision also preserves the unidimensionality of the civic orientations index. Subjective competence is only weakly correlated with the non-efficacy components of the civic orientations index in 1973 and, as a result, falls off the civic orientation dimension.

[6]The correlation between the 1965 and 1973 civic orientations variables is a strong .47, in spite of the slightly different composition of the two indexes.

[7]The six campaign activities are attempting to influence others, attending rallies, belonging to political clubs, using campaign buttons or stickers, donating money, and performing any other campaign-related activities. All activities fall on the first dimension (loadings$\geq$.52) of a principal component factor analysis.

[8]These five indicators fall on the first dimension (loadings$\geq$.21) of a principal component factor analysis. The parent interest variables separate from the others in the varimax rotation, indicating two distinct dimensions to family politicization -- one reflecting parent involvement, the other family

interaction. Since both contribute to the political environment of the home, we combine them in a single measure.

[9]This information was gathered in the interview by reading a list of organizational types to the respondents and asking them to name the organizations of each type to which they belonged. Included on the list were business, service, and church groups; fraternal organizations; neighborhood and civic associations; sports teams and informal clubs; and labor unions. Respondents also were given an opportunity to name organizations of types not listed.

[10]We experimented with several other versions of this index: an index of involvement in school politics only and indexes based on the level of involvement in organizations. None performed as well in the model as the school activities index.

[11]One attractive candidate for this variable is child intelligence. It influences educational achievement and has been found to be related to child civic orientations (Easton and Dennis, 1967). Unfortunately, our study contains no direct measure of intelligence. Grade point average and program of study, however, may be used as weak surrogates for it. When the partial correlation of youth civic orientations and status is recomputed adding these two variables as controls, it is slightly lowered (to r=.30) but not by enough to suggest that they represent the missing intervening variables. Whether the missing variable is intelligence itself remains to be determined.

[12]The addition of other explanatory variables would increase the variance explained by the model. One important variable for this generation of young adults in particular is political ideology (Beck and Jennings, 1979). Adding an ideology variable to the model (coded one for liberals and zero for everyone

else) increases the R^2 to .32.

[13]These effects are estimated using exactly the same paths as before (see Figures 2-5) but substituting the coefficients from Figure 6. They are the sum of direct effects and those indirect effects captured in the model. Other indirect effects are ignored.

[14]In a study of the political involvement of high school students in the 1970s, Sigel and Hoskins (1980) also attribute an important role to the school.

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